

# Planning Commission

## Remote Hearing – August 24, 2005

### 8-GP-2005

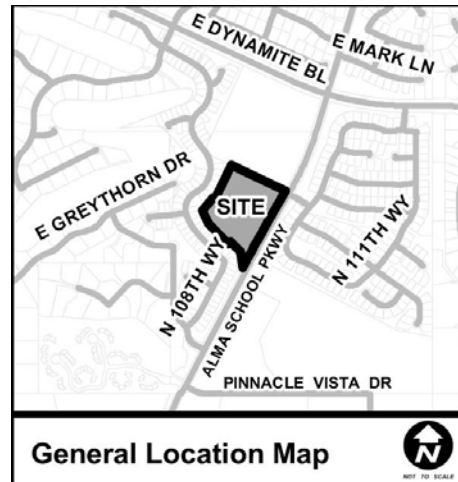
### General Plan Review

#### Introduction

Case 8-GP-2005 is a request for an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Element. The property is located south of the southwest corner of Alma School Parkway and Dynamite Boulevard and includes approximately 9.5 acres of land. There is a concurrent rezoning case (17-ZN-2005) associated with this requested General Plan amendment.

#### Major General Plan Amendment

The Growing Smarter Acts (state statutes) required cities to establish criteria for major amendments to the General Plan. The Scottsdale City Council established the criteria for a major General Plan amendment in February 2001. Those criteria are a part of the city's General Plan, and include a land use change matrix, a property size criteria, and Character Area and Water/Wastewater Infrastructure criteria. (See attachment #7) If a proposed change meets any of the criteria, the proposal constitutes a major amendment to the General Plan. A land use change from Office to a Suburban Neighborhoods designation is considered a major amendment, regardless of the size of the parcel.



#### Current Conditions/Background

This property is designated Office on the General Plan Land Use Map. Directly north of this parcel the designation is Commercial, and east, south, and west of this parcel are Suburban Neighborhoods with a range of residential densities. No character area study has been approved, and no neighborhood plans have been proposed or completed for this area.

This site is located within the Troon master planned community. A master planned community is established with anticipation of the need and appropriate quantity and locational distribution of various land uses throughout the community. This Office site was located near the intersection of Dynamite and Alma School Road along with a commercial center that now includes other offices and retail uses, and was intended to provide major offices compatible with the commercial center at the time of planning the master planned community.

## **Description of Proposal**

The applicant is proposing the following amendment to the General Plan:

- Land Use Element designation amendment from Office (Major) to Suburban Neighborhoods.

“The Office designation includes a variety of office uses... Major offices include offices and related uses that have more than one story and may have underground parking. Typically, this use is in and around the central business district, other commercial cores, or freeway interchanges. Arterial roadway access is desirable.” This contrasts with minor offices which are generally one story with at-grade parking and these may be located along either collector or arterial streets. This site has zoning entitlements for development with major office development characteristics.

The proposed Suburban Neighborhoods designation “includes medium to small-lot single family neighborhoods or subdivisions. Densities in Suburban Neighborhoods are usually more than one house per acre, but less than eight houses per acre. This category also includes some townhouses and can also be used for small lot single-family homes such as patio homes...These uses may be used as a transition between less intense residential areas and non-residential areas such as offices or retail centers. The terrain should be relatively flat, or gently sloping, to accommodate this density. Preservation of environmental features (particularly in desert settings near the mountains) is a key consideration and in the past has often been accommodated through master-planning communities or clustering.”

## **General Plan Analysis**

### Land Use Element and Economic Vitality Element:

Two of the goals of the Land Use Element involve maintaining a balance of land uses for residential and supporting non-residential uses that will maintain the city’s economic base and encourage land use patterns that reduce automobile trips. The Economic Vitality Element also addresses this issue when it states “Maintain and develop neighborhood-shopping areas that are in proximity to neighborhoods and residential concentrations.” The location of this office in the master plan was intended to provide major office services to the greater Troon area together with the adjacent commercial center.

The nearest General Plan designation for office and neighborhood serving commercial/retail is 5-7 miles away at Pinnacle Peak and Pima and at Westland and Scottsdale Road. Office development has occurred in commercially zoned properties at 101<sup>st</sup> Way on Dynamite Boulevard, about 1.5 miles northwest of this site; and at Alma School Road and Jomax Road, about 1 mile south of this site. The office use in this area is oriented to neighborhood related office uses. The scale of office use in the area is limited and is likely not to negatively impact job creation efforts. Given the population densities, existing area character and proximity to existing residential the request to amend the General Plan designation to Suburban Neighborhoods will not have a negative impact on the economic vitality of the City.

#### Character and Design Element:

The Character and Design Element of the General Plan designates this site within a Resort Village Character Type. This Character type typically contains "...A variety of tourist accommodations, quality office, specialty retail, recreation uses including golf courses and tennis courts, employment, and compatible high amenity residential neighborhoods."

The Character Types Map also designates an Activity Center designation located south and west of the subject site (Jomax and 104<sup>th</sup> St). 'Activity Centers' include mixed-use areas that are smaller than employment cores, but larger than neighborhood centers and often have greater intensities of development than the surrounding area.

This site offers a unique setting for any development, with its existing on-site natural features that could be incorporated into the site development, and also because of the surrounding mountains and natural features. This character setting is not available in other parts of the community and should be given consideration in value to the desirability of a well-designed office complex. The proposed residential use is also consistent with the surrounding character and residential densities that exist now.

#### Neighborhoods Element:

The Neighborhoods Element's focus is on housing and neighborhood preservation, however, it does acknowledge that neighborhoods may have competing goals and often newer neighborhoods prefer not to have services located nearby, causing impacts on the community's economic vitality, potentially increasing distance of travel, and also impacting established neighborhoods that do have services nearby

A change of Land Use designation on this site will have an immediate impact on the property to the north which will remain with its existing Commercial General Plan land use designation, and PCC (Planned Commercial Center) zoning. This zoning district requires a greater setback from residential development than from an office zoning district – this change will impact that property's existing development entitlements.

#### Growth Areas Element:

The Growth Areas Element approaches growth management from a perspective of identifying those areas of the community that are most appropriate for development focus. Having certain "growth areas" allows an increased focus on creating or enhancing transportation systems and infrastructure coordinated with development activity. One goal of the Growth Areas Element is to plan the orderly building of infrastructure and ensure that development timing is guided by the adequacy of existing and or expandable infrastructure, services and facilities such as water, sewer, drainage, and transportation facilities. Similar to the Character Types Map, the Growth Areas Map indicates "Activity Centers" as areas where development may be focused, but to a lesser degree than a Growth Area. The Activity Center is located at Jomax and 104<sup>th</sup> Street. Over time, the concentration of non-residential uses in this Activity Center has been eroded, and may

not be considered an activity center any longer. Resort and residential concentrations do remain in this activity center area.

#### Community Mobility Element:

One of the goals of the Community Mobility Element is to relieve traffic congestion. To that end it is recommended that the city emphasize “work, live, and play” relationships in land use decisions that will reduce the distance and frequency of automotive trips.

Another goal discusses the relationship and balance of land uses within general areas that will help reduce the demand on transportation systems. And yet another statement of the Mobility Element discusses promoting non-motorized travel for short neighborhood trips such as homes to retail or service centers. On balance, fewer trips would be generated to the site by having residential uses instead of office uses (based on the Land Use Impact Analysis Model), but more trips to service areas off of the site may be generated.

#### **Key Issues**

- Conversion of master planned major office use to residential use.
- Negative impact on existing adjacent (to north) commercial center (PCC - Planned Commercial Center zoning) – if this proposal is approved then that property will need greater setbacks along the south property line.
- Existing residents preference for residential uses.

#### **Community Involvement**

The applicant has engaged in several neighborhood outreach efforts, including door-to-door visitation, fliers, phone calls.

The results of the Community Involvement were wide-ranging but overall the community supports the applicant’s proposal to change from Office to Suburban Neighborhoods – generally due to dislike for 2-story offices. Although the community has requested specific development considerations, those cannot be stipulated as part of a General Plan amendment application and would need to be brought forward with a change of zoning.

#### **Conclusion**

This proposal is part of the Troon North Master Plan. As a master planned community it was intended to holistically provide the needed services to the residents that would live in nearby neighborhoods. A major office use probably is not viable in this location any longer. Citizen response appears to be in favor of residential uses rather than office uses.

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**Approved by:**

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Randy Grant  
Chief Planning Officer

**Attachments:**

1. Applicant's Project Narrative
2. Context Aerial
3. Close-up Aerial
4. Existing General Plan Land Use Map
5. Proposed General Plan Land Use Map
6. Community Input
7. Major General Plan Amendment Criteria

**General Plan Amendment  
Parcels "M" & "O" at Troon North  
575-PA-04**

**7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION  
SUPPORTING OR CHANGING THE APPROVED PLANS, GOALS AND  
POLICIES OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN**

Character and Lifestyle

The goal of this General Plan Amendment is to rezone two commercial parcels within the Troon North master-planned community into a single residential subdivision. In order to accomplish this, the owner would have to convert 9.5 acres of Commercial Office Property to a residential zoning (preferably R-4), which would result in a lot layout similar in design and density to the two subdivisions that border the subject property to the east and west.

The change to residential development is appropriate in this area because the rural desert character of the Troon North masterplan is more conducive to neighborhoods than commercial development. The 1800-acre project was designed as a resort & residential golf community, with some supporting commercial parcels. However, since the resort component was replaced with residential when no resort developer materialized, the commercial properties within the communities were not as necessary.

As a result, the peace and solitude of this area's rolling hills and boulder outcroppings make for a very desirable residential neighborhood. And, it is not surprising that Troon North's primary commercial site at Dynamite and Alma School remains unfinished and short on tenants. The majority of the residents are happy with the convenience of a market, gas station and some local services, but the completed second-level office space at this complex is under-utilized and has remained vacant years after completion of the first phase.

Land Use

The subject property is within the Troon North community and lies at the center of the Reatta Pass/Troon Character Area. For the most part, this Character Area is predominantly residential, since the dramatic terrain offers a feeling of remoteness and solitude. In some areas, portions of this Character Area border the City's preaserve, and are approximate to the Tonto National Forest. It's not surprising that residential property has become the "man-made" environment of the area, since it is most compatible with the area's natural beauty.

In its own way, the area's natural beauty is one of the City's cultural resources, and serves as a destination for visitors and residents alike, who travel to the area to enjoy

the Four Seasons Resort, or one of the area's six renowned golf courses. Those commercial sites that do exist are predominantly restaurants, bars, and local services, but not business offices. The majority of the local businesses are located near the intersections of Alma School and Jomax, which the City planners have designated an Activity Area on the Growth Areas Element Plan. (See attached.)

#### Economic Vitality

This designated Activity Area on the Growth Areas Element Plan is relatively large and is only a mile away from the subject property. There is a balance of developed and undeveloped commercial property within the Activity Area, so while it currently contributes to the economic vitality of the area, there is still room for growth and additional businesses. These existing and future businesses can still contribute to the City's Economic Vitality by providing for residents and tourists, without impacting the quality of life or neighborhood integrity of those residents surrounding the subject property.

#### Community Involvement

Land planning can tend to be somewhat contradictory since it is impossible to plan a property with the input of its future residents. Just like every other plan in the area, the masterplan preceded the residents in Troon North. But in the case of this General Plan Amendment proposal, the residents will be given the rare opportunity to give input to how these 9.5 acres will be used. Our original questioning of the area's residents indicated that they would be in support of thoughtful residential development instead of parking lots and office buildings. During the course of this project, the owner hopes to engage the local residents, and create an outcome that is acceptable to all parties.

#### Housing

If the subject property is rezoned for residential use, the resulting houses will be a unique neighborhood. They will be immediately adjacent to a 20-acre PCC, which is still under a phased development plan. The current collection of restaurants, filling station and a variety of services will enhance the lifestyle of the future homeowners.

These new homes will also be close to two completed, existing subdivisions. Careful planning and design will help to insure that property values and quality of life are protected for the existing residents as well as the new home buyers.

#### Neighborhoods

A small subdivision on the subject property instead of an office project, would further contribute to the area's neighborhood identity. By carefully respecting the scale, integrity and quality of the surrounding homes, the new subdivision will nicely fill the "gap" between the two existing subdivisions, and add a residential cohesiveness to the community. (Sandwiched as it is, between the two older subdivisions, several of the nearby residents said they felt as if it always should have been a residential property, and were surprised by our need to rezone it.)

#### Open Space and Recreation

The subject property is only 9.5 acres, so dedicating a large portion of it as open space is not practical. However, a portion of the subject property will be dedicated as a trail easement in order to connect two ends of an incomplete trail that runs through the Troon North community.

#### Preservation and Environmental Planning

Since it is within the hillside area, portions of the property will have to be dedicated as Natural Area Open Space, as determined by a slope analysis. A portion of this open space will be dedicated along Alma School Parkway as a scenic buffer (40 feet wide average, with a minimum of 30 feet), and will match the buffer fronting other Alma School properties. Other areas of Natural Open Space will preserve a sandy-bottomed wash and/or act as a buffer between this project and the neighboring homes.

#### Cost of Development

Existing off-site infrastructure is already in place, and additional costs to develop this property will be paid by the owner. Therefore the project will be self-sustaining. Since it is planned that the project be gated and private, future street and open space maintenance will be borne by the future homeowners' association.

#### Growth Areas

The plans, goals and policies of this topic's guiding principles do not seem to apply to a residential down-zoning.

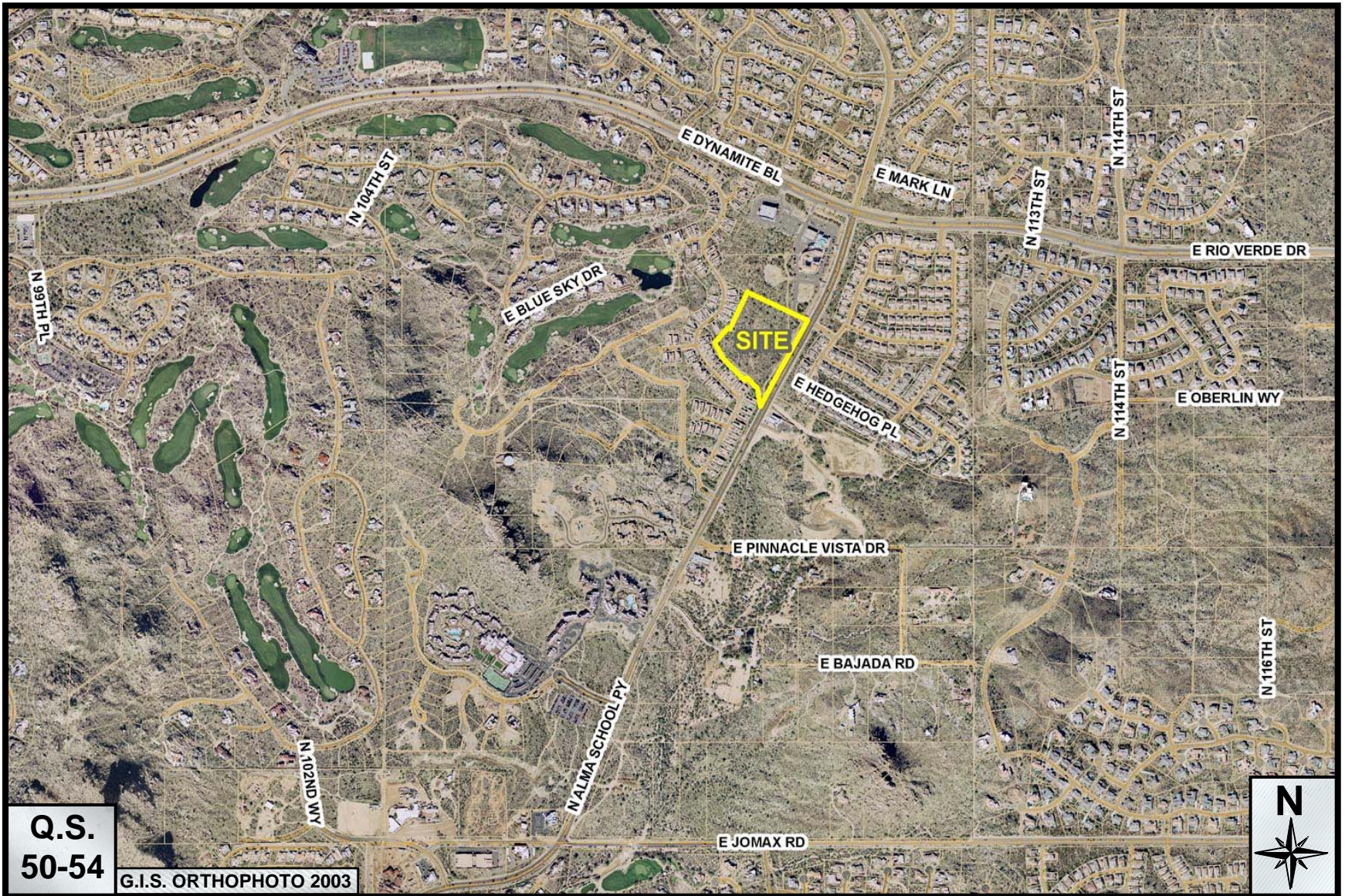
#### Public Services and Facilities

All of the infrastructure (outside of what would have to be built within the new subdivision) is already fully constructed and operating in place. Since it was designed to accommodate the commercial zoning, adding these few residential lots should not burden or stress the existing system.

#### Community Mobility

Approval of the residential rezoning for the subject property will enhance the community mobility since it will greatly decrease the trip generation and traffic volume on the local roads, especially when compared to a commercial office project. This in turn will decrease the air and noise pollution and enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.





Parcel M and O At Troon

**8-GP-2005**

ATTACHMENT #2





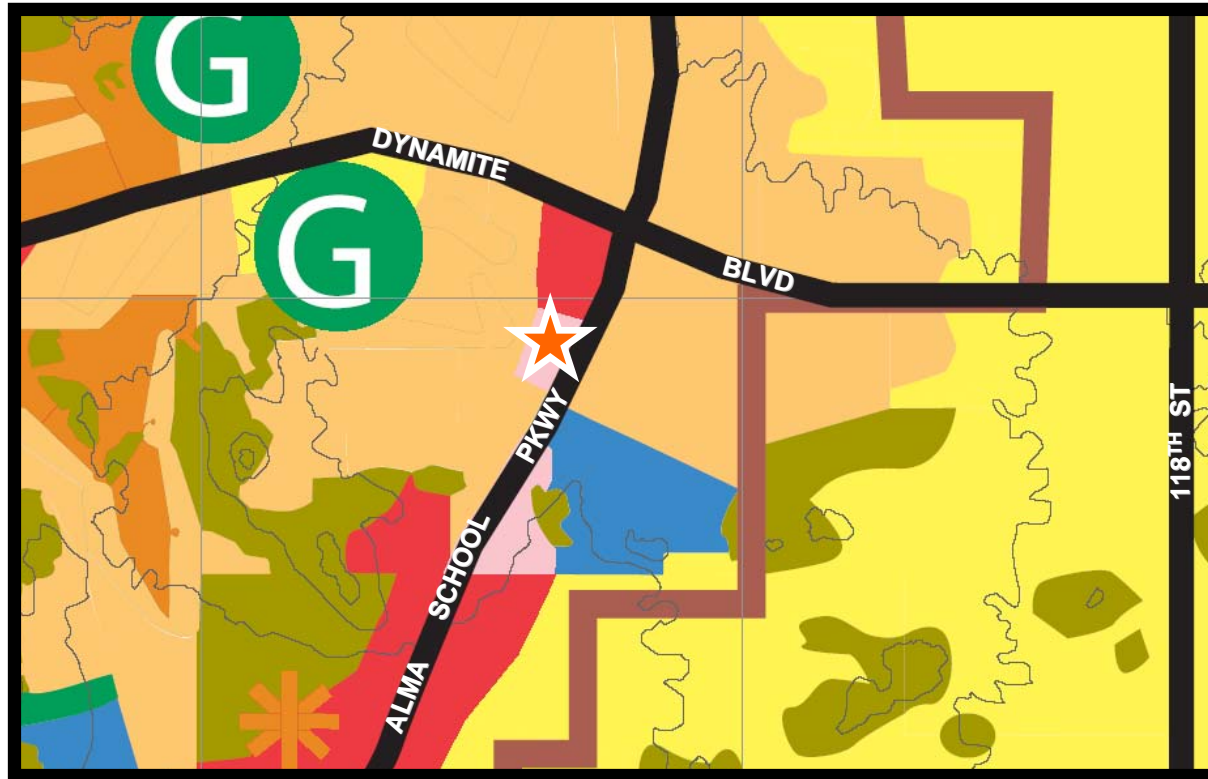
Parcel M and O At Troon

**8-GP-2005**

ATTACHMENT #3



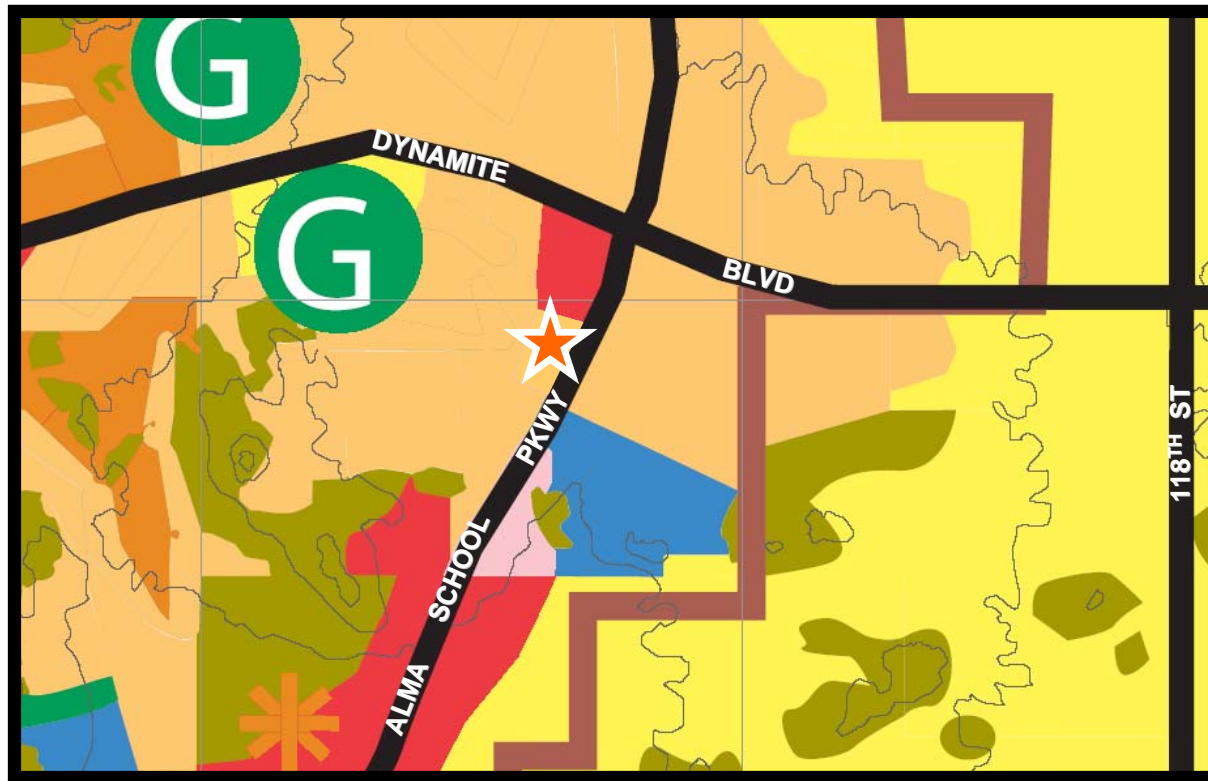
# General Plan (Existing)



**8-GP-2005**  
ATTACHMENT #4

Adopted by City Council October 30, 2001  
Ratified by Scottsdale voters March 12, 2002  
revised to show McDowell Sonoran Preserve as of May 2004  
revised to reflect General Plan amendments through June 2004

# General Plan (Proposed)



**8-GP-2005**  
ATTACHMENT #5

Adopted by City Council October 30, 2001  
Ratified by Scottsdale voters March 12, 2002  
revised to show McDowell Sonoran Preserve as of May 2004  
revised to reflect General Plan amendments through June 2004

## Attachment #6 Citizen Involvement

The above attachment is on file at the City of  
Scottsdale Current Planning office,  
7447 E Indian School Road, Suite 105.

**Criteria for a Major Amendment to the 2001 Scottsdale General Plan**  
(City Council approved 10/30/01)

**Scottsdale's Mission:** In guiding the formation of the major amendment criteria, it is important to consider the major mission elements of the city, these being –

- a. Preserve Scottsdale's unique southwestern character,
- b. Plan for and manage growth in harmony with the natural desert surroundings,
- c. Promote the livability of the community,
- d. Enhance and protect neighborhoods, and
- e. Ensure and sustain the quality of life for all residents and visitors.

Proposed changes to the land use element of the city's General Plan that compromise the spirit and intent of these mission statements will qualify for consideration as a major amendment to the General Plan.

**Scottsdale's Land Use Element:** It is important that as proposals are considered in regard to the following criteria that the values and structure of the land use element be used as a guide. These values are an important part of the city's land use plan:

- a. Land uses should respect the natural and man-made environment,
- b. Land uses should provide for an unsurpassed quality of life for both its citizens and visitors,
- c. Land uses should contribute to the unique identity that is Scottsdale,
- d. Land uses should contribute to the building of community unity and cohesiveness,
- e. Land uses should work in concert with transportation systems in order to promote choice and reduce negative impacts upon the lifestyle of citizens and the quality of the environment,
- f. Land uses should be balanced in order to allow for the community to provide adequate live, work and play opportunities, and
- g. Land uses should provide opportunities for the design of uses to fit and respect the character, scale and quality of uses that exist in the community.

It is recognized that a proposed change of land uses within any given portion of the city may have a substantial impact upon the balance of land uses within the city as a whole. The General Plan Land Use Element was formulated and adopted with full consideration of the character and balance of land uses that are appropriate within all distinct areas of the city. Beyond this level of consideration, the plan considers the relationships between and among the various planning areas and studies that have helped to build the plan. This leads to a balance and pattern of land uses that reflects the community's values, aspirations and the city's stated mission.

**Character of Land Uses:** A change in the planned land uses may have a substantial impact upon the city by transforming the character of the land uses within a given planning area. The character of the land uses may be indicated by the physical intensity of the use in terms of massing, height or relationships between uses; the blending of different types of uses and the patterns and scale inherent to each; or the relative amount, type and placement of open spaces. Significant changes in the established land use character will be considered in determining whether or not a proposal is a major amendment.

**Criteria:** An amendment to the Land Use Element of Scottsdale's General Plan shall be defined as a major amendment if it meets any one of the following criteria:

*1. Change in Land Use Category*

A change in the land use category on the land use plan that changes the land use character from one type to another as delineated in the following table:

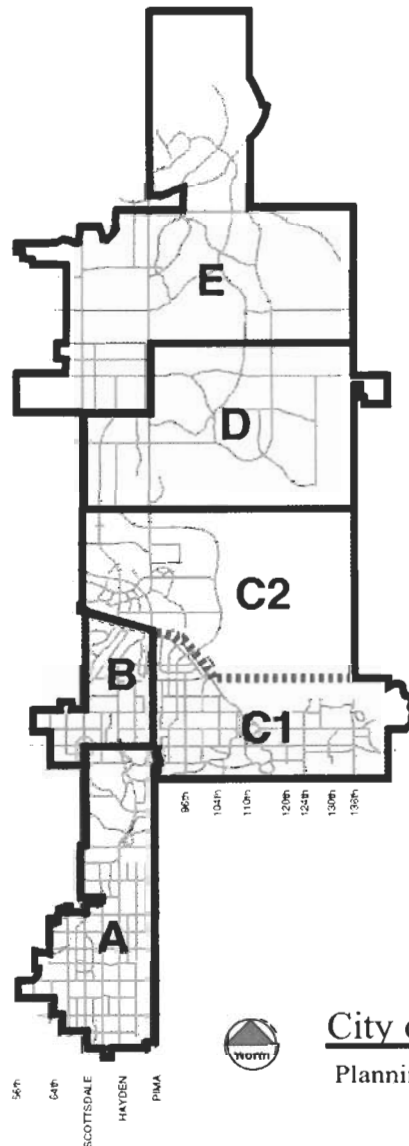
	<i>To:</i>	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
<i>From:</i>	Land Use Plan Category					
Group A	Rural Neighborhoods  Natural Open Space		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group B	Suburban Neighborhoods  Developed Open Space  Cultural/ Institutional or Public Use			Yes	Yes	Yes
Group C	Urban Neighborhoods  Resorts/Tourism	Yes				Yes
Group D	Neighborhood Commercial  Minor Office  Minor Employment	Yes	Yes			Yes
Group E	Commercial  Office  Employment  Mixed Use  Regional Use Overlay	Yes	Yes			

## 2a. Area of Change Criteria

A change in the land use designation that includes the following gross acreages:

- \* Planning Zones A, B 10 acres or more
- \* Planning Zone C1, C2, D and E 15 acres or more

JENNY LYNN  
CIRCLE MOUNTAIN  
HONDA BOW  
ROCKAWAY HILLS  
DESERT HILLS  
JOY RANCH  
STAGECOACH PASS  
CAREFREE HWY.  
DOVE VALLEY  
LONE MOUNTAIN  
DIXALETA  
DYNAMITE  
JOMAX  
HAPPY VALLEY  
PINNACLE PEAK  
DEER VALLEY  
BEARDSLEY  
OUTER LOOP  
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BLVD  
GREENWAY  
THUNDERBIRD  
SWEETWATER  
CACTUS  
CHOLLA  
SHEA  
DOUBLETREE RANCH  
McCORMICK  
INDIAN BEND  
McDONALD  
CHAPARRAL  
CAMELBACK  
INDIAN SCHOOL  
THOMAS  
McDOWELL  
McKELLIPS



ZONE A includes the Downtown Business/Entertainment District and the most mature neighborhoods in the community

ZONE B includes the Scottsdale Airport, the fastest growing and one of the three largest employment centers in the metropolitan area

ZONE C covers the East Shea area, McDowell Mountain Ranch, DC Ranch, and Greyhawk, all major master planned developments (C1 & C2 are divided by the CAP Canal and Thunderbird Road)

ZONE D encompasses the Pinnacle Peak, Desert Highlands and Troons communities, and large undeveloped tracts

ZONE E includes Terra Vita, the Boulders, Desert Mountain, Legend Trails, the 15,000-acre tract of State Trust Lands, and other undeveloped lands



**City of Scottsdale**

Planning Zones



2b. *Acreage Criteria Overriding Incentives*

Certain exceptions to these criteria (2a.) are considered to be in the interest of the general public and in keeping with the mission and values of the community. A proposal that includes any of the following conditions will not be considered as a major amendment:

- A property owner initiated decrease in the residential land use category of units planned by the land use element, or
- A proposal for a change in the land use designation that results in no increase in the planned number of dwelling units and includes at least 30% more Natural Area Open Space than is required by the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance for the property and that is:
  - of substantial size, that being at least seven or more contiguous acres, and protected in such a manner so as to be designated with the land use category of Natural Area Open Space
  - and where such open space protects sensitive natural features and is visually and/or physically accessible to the general public and does not include lands contained within scenic corridors or vista corridors, or
- A proposal to change the land use category to Cultural/ Institutional with a municipal, public school or non-profit cultural facility when such a proposed facility is not adjacent to a single-family land use designation (Rural or Suburban Neighborhoods) or does not share direct access to any street that has single-family residential driveway access within one half (1/2) mile of the proposal.
- A proposal within the Downtown Plan area that maintains the same development standards type (e.g. Type 1, Type 1.5 or Type 2) and contains no more than fifteen (15) gross acres or less.

3. *Character Area Criteria*

Character areas have been added to the city's planning process in order to recognize and maintain the unique physical, visual and functional conditions that occur in distinct areas across the community. The city recognizes that these form a context that is important to the lifestyle, economic well being and long term viability of the community. These areas are identified by a number of parameters including but not limited to building scale, open space types and patterns, age of development and topographic setting.

If a proposal to change the land use category has not been clearly demonstrated by the applicant to comply with the guidelines and standards embodied within an approved character area plan it will be considered as a major amendment. (Note: The character area plans that qualify for consideration as of November, 2000 include the Desert Foothills Plan, Dynamite Foothills Plan, Cactus Corridor Plan and Downtown Plan.)

4. *Water/Wastewater Infrastructure Criteria*

If a proposal to change the planned land use category results in the premature increase in the size of a master planned water transmission or sewer collection facility it will qualify as a major amendment.

*If a project applicant wishes to appeal the designation of a General Plan major amendment, the Comprehensive Planning Division Planning Director, or the position equivalent, will evaluate the appeal and make a major amendment determination.*